United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/130

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-20383 (E) 171218 191218

Please recycle

Statement

One year before the twenty-fifth anniversary review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia sees a significant opportunity to take stock of the extent to which social protection systems, public services and investments in sustainable infrastructure are contributing to the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development, to identify persistent gaps and new challenges and to develop future recommendations.

Social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Without greater investment in that regard, practically all 17 Sustainable Development Goals – be they social, economic, environmental or political – will remain well out of reach.

In addition to being increased, investment should be directed towards transforming unequal gender relations to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5).

In the light of this transformative potential, Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia considers it necessary to pursue the following:

- Explore synergies among social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure to achieve gender equality, taking into account the productive and reproductive roles of women
- Discuss contextual factors that shape the need for and affect the design of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, giving due consideration to restrictions (e.g. time and income), barriers (e.g. to asset ownership and labour markets) and risks (e.g. violence and discrimination)
- Examine social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure to distinguish the specific design and implementation characteristics that either support or impede the realization of women's human rights
- Identify the principles of gender-sensitive design, financing and implementation across public policy areas (social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure) and sectors (education, health, childcare and care for older persons, transport, energy, water and sanitation, etc.)
- Develop action-oriented recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and support the implementation of global commitments addressing gender issues, including in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1).

These issues are based on the priority themes of previous sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, including the sixty-first session on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work and the sixty-second session on challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. Special attention should be given to the multiple and intersecting inequalities that can hamper the ability of women and girls to access social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure or limit their ability to benefit from related investments. One area of analysis will be expanding social protection to women in the informal sector, in both rural and urban areas, and adapting public services and infrastructure to their needs.

The right to social security is enshrined in the United Nations legal instruments establishing the rights of population groups, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the International Convention on the

Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women requires States Parties to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure their equal enjoyment of the right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave (article 11 (e)).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recognizes the important role of social protection, public services and infrastructure in the eradication of poverty and the advancement of women and girls more broadly. In the critical area of concern, women and poverty, Member States committed to create social security systems wherever they do not exist, or review them with a view to placing women and men on an equal footing, at every stage of their lives. The critical role of infrastructure was recognized in the areas of women and the economy, and women and the environment, in which Member States were called upon to provide public infrastructure to ensure equal market access for women and men entrepreneurs and to support equal access for women to housing infrastructure, safe water and sustainable and affordable energy technologies, such as wind, solar, biomass and other renewable sources.

These and other issues have also been considered by the Commission on the Status of Women under the various priority themes of recent years. For example, the agreed conclusions of the fifty-third session in 2009 established a clear link between unpaid care work and areas considered under the priority theme calling for the development of adequate social protection schemes, investment in quality, accessible and affordable public services and greater access to infrastructure to reduce the burden of care. In recent years, including during its sixty-first session in 2017, the Commission has reiterated the need to recognize, reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work done by women, including through the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy and information and communications technology, as well as accessible, affordable and quality childcare and care services. During its sixty-first session, the Commission also established the link between the productive activities of women and the advancement of women in paid employment, stressing the need for gender-responsive rural development strategies and urban planning and infrastructure, including sustainable, safe, accessible and affordable public transport systems, street lighting, and separate and adequate sanitation facilities, so as to facilitate women's access to places, products, services and economic opportunities. During its sixty-second session, the Commission reiterated the need for investment in gender-responsive social protection, public services, infrastructure and technology with a particular focus on women and girls in rural areas.

The fundamental importance of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is affirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both as a goal in itself and a key component for the success of the 2030 Agenda as a whole. Social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure are integral to the 2030 Agenda and essential to achieving gender equality and sustainable development through the 17 Goals: Goal 5 explicitly recognizes the importance of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, specifically with regard to unpaid care and domestic work in target 5.4; Goal 1 stresses the urgent need to implement social protection systems and measures for all; Goal 9 is a commitment to developing quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all; and Goal 10 calls for the adoption of fiscal, wage and social protection policies to progressively achieve greater equality.